

Review

Apologetics is the act of offering a reasoned defense of the Christian faith.

Knowledge

"...always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you;"

Wisdom

"...yet do it with gentleness and respect,"
~ 1 Peter 3:15

Apologetics includes two general approaches.

- **Offensive**
 - Offering positive proof for Christianity as a belief system
 - Answering (refuting) arguments non-Christians give to support their beliefs
- **Defensive**
 - Clarifying the Christian position against misunderstanding or misrepresentation
 - Answering objections, questions, criticisms of Christianity

• Most importantly, apologetics is ultimately focused on **persuasion**
– convincing others to commit their lives to Jesus Christ and apply the truth of Christianity.

Tactics

Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. ~ Colossians 4:6

Tactics are:

- Moves to help control the conversation
- Used to gain a footing
- Helpful in exposing another person's bad thinking to guide them to the truth

Tactics are NOT:

- Manipulative tricks
- Clever ploys to embarrass others
- Meant to belittle those who do not agree

100% God and 100% man

- Our job is to communicate the Gospel as clearly, graciously and persuasively as possible
- God will handle the rest – trust Him to be effective

A Modest Goal

- Focus on "**putting a stone**" in someone's shoe

The “Columbo” Tactic – Ask Questions

*Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves,
so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.
~ Matthew 10:16*

Why Questions?

- They are **interactive** - sincere questions engage others
- They are great **conversation** starters
- You will **learn** something
- They are **neutral** - you can make progress on a point without being pushy
- Carefully placed questions put you in the **driver’s seat**

Question, Question, Question

1. Gather **information** - use questions to figure out exactly **what** the other person is saying
2. Reverse the burden of **proof** - use questions to find out **why** the other person believes what they are saying
3. **Lead** the way - use questions to **control** the conversation and to **guide** it in a specific direction

Gathering Information

Model Question: “What do you mean by that?”

- Helps avoid **misunderstanding** someone
- Helps avoid **misrepresenting** someone

Variations of “What do you mean by that?”

- “What do you mean by ...?”
- What do you think about ...?
- Is there a reason you think ...?
- How is that different from...?”
- Why not?

Reversing the Burden of Proof

“The Burden of Proof”

- The **responsibility** someone has to defend or give evidence for his view
- Whoever **makes the claim** bears the burden
- Giving an explanation or opinion is not the same as giving or refuting an argument
 - Make the other person give you reasons, not just a point of view
- Always ask:
 - Is it **possible**? Could ever happen?
 - Is it **plausible**? Is it reasonable to think it might have taken place?
 - Is it **probable**? Is it the best explanation, considering other opinions?

Model Question: “How did you come to that conclusion?”

- Gives the other person a chance to explain his **reasoning**
- Forces the other person to give an **account** for their own beliefs
- Helps to gather more **material** for addressing objections

Variations of “How did you come to that conclusion?”

- Why do you say that?
- What are your reasons for holding that view?
- What makes you think that’s the right way to see it?
- I’m curious. Why would that idea seem compelling to you?
- Why would you believe something when you have no reason to think it’s true?

Leading the Conversation

Go on the offensive, without being offensive

- **Inform** – use questions to find a common ground (mutual agreement) in order to move yourself into a position to share your knowledge
- **Persuade** – use questions to remind the other person of something they already know
- Set up the **terms** – set the stage for the conversation in your favor (turning the tables)
- **Refute** – use questions to subtly expose a weakness or flaw in the other person’s thinking

Model Questions:

- Would you agree that ...?
- Have you considered ...?
- Can you help me understand this? Can you clear this up for me?
- Would you consider an alternative? Would you be willing to look at another angle?
- I’m not sure I agree with the way you put it. Think about this...

Perfecting the “Columbo” Tactic

- **Anticipate** beforehand what might come up and how the conversation might progress
- **Reflect** afterward on what took place and how you could have done better
- **Practice** the responses you think of to prepare for the next opportunity
- Watch out for **leading** questions and challenges in **disguise**
- Consider style – **Lt. Columbo** vs. **Lawyer**

Homework

1. Choose a topic, objection or situation and define the context
2. Anticipate what the other person might say
3. Use the “Columbo” tactic and it’s various questions to respond
4. Continue to work out how the conversation might continue
5. Decide how/when to end the conversation
6. Note whether the conversation could have taken a different turn, and if so, how?